Liberal Arts Essentials Course Assessment Report

Course: 101 Sociological Perspectives

Writing Unit: no

Instructor: Sandra Schroer

Methods: 1st stream reaction papers, 2nd stream LAE Questionnaire (student evaluation form)

LAE Category: Social Foundations

Goal: #1

Learning Objective: #1 A Muskingum College student will be able to define a meaningful issue (or problem) related to an academic area of study, formulate a position (or solution or argument) on that issue, and communicate his or her position effectively to a professional audience.

Departmental Perspective (if applicable):

Departmental Perspective 1:

Students will develop the ability to communicate information in a meaningful way related to a field of study.

Departmental Perspective 2:

Students will develop the ability to analyze questions related to major concepts covered in a field of study.

A. Student Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objective or Departmental Perspective</th>
<th>Number and percentage of students exceeding expectations</th>
<th>Number and percentage of students meeting expectations</th>
<th>Number and percentage of students failing to meet expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Stream of Evidence</td>
<td>7 or 28%</td>
<td>17 or 68%</td>
<td>1 or 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Stream of Evidence</td>
<td>18 or 82%</td>
<td>2 or 9%</td>
<td>2 or 9%</td>
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</table>
B. Student work examined

Reaction Papers: Students wrote a 2 page reaction paper in which they applied sociological principles developed throughout the semester to the analysis of one article. The goal was to analyze the article, define a meaningful issue or problem, formulate a position or solution and communicate their position clearly. Individual papers were assessed on a 1-4 point scale which relates to the departmental goals. See rubric template attached.

A second stream of evidence used was the LAE Goal Assessment Evaluation Form given to students during the final week of class. This form includes questions asking the students to evaluate how well the course addressed goal 1 of the LAE. Using both a self reported measure (an evaluation) and a measure assessed by the faculty member (reaction papers) ensures that multiple streams of data are being used to develop a sense of how well the course is meeting the goals of the LAE.

C. Scoring Criteria

Stream 1, Individual papers are assessed on a 1-4 point scale which relates to the department goals (see attached). 1=failing to meet expectations, 2&3 = meeting expectations, 4=exceeding expectations.

Stream 2, LAE student self reported questionnaire

D. Analysis/Reflections on the course outcomes

While 82% of the students reported that the course exceeded their developmental expectations for goal 1, only 28% actually demonstrated an exceptional level of development in their ability to define a meaningful issue, formulate a position on that issue, and communicate his or her position effectively. There is a clear discrepancy between student perceptions and student performance as it is evaluated by the instructor using the departmental rubric (stream 1). However, the majority of students (68%) were successful (according to stream 1 evidence) in achieving goal #1.

This evidence suggests that the course content and its delivery are effectively preparing students to achieve goal #1 in the LAE. In addition, they are successful in satisfying departmental perspectives 1 and 2.

2 students believed the course did not enable them to achieve goal 1, according to the evidence provided by stream 2, however, one of these students performed at a satisfactory level according to stream 1. The remaining student’s lack of achievement cannot be explained considering the majority of students appear to be effectively served, nor can it be assumed that it is the same person who failed to meet expectations in both streams of evidence.
E. Reflections on the assessment

Using both a self reported measure (an evaluation form) and a measure assessed by the faculty member (reaction papers) ensured that multiple streams of data were used to develop a sense of how well the course is meeting goal 1 of the LAE. However, students’ perceptions should not be overlooked. The discrepancy between students’ perceptions and their actual performance is of concern. Granted, self reported measures are inherently bias, however, it is important to assure that students feel they receive an adequate education in a subject in order for them to feel confident as they continue their education. I do not believe this warrants a change in assessment. It should be a consideration when the instructor is communicating goals and measures of achievement to students, throughout the semester.

C. Attachments (Rubrics, Checklists, Pre and Post tests, other evaluation methods, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student will be able to define a meaningful issue or problem</td>
<td>Student relied on teacher-generated definition or posed an issue requiring little thought.</td>
<td>Student put forth an issue that lends itself to readily available answers.</td>
<td>Student posed a focused issue with significant meaning.</td>
<td>Student posed a provocative issue with deep meaning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student will formulate a position (or solution or argument)</td>
<td>Student formulated a response, albeit questionable.</td>
<td>Student formulated a standard, expected position.</td>
<td>Student formed a solid position with significant meaning.</td>
<td>Student originated a creative and thoughtful position.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student will communicate his or her ideas clearly</td>
<td>Student communicated his/her position with</td>
<td>Student presented the position</td>
<td>Student presented the position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>position effectively</td>
<td>connected to his/her position.</td>
<td>position with clarity.</td>
<td>clarity and special emphasis on significant points.</td>
<td>with clarity, style, and grace.</td>
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